

**APPLICATION INFORMATION**  
**CALIFORNIA REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST (RDH) LICENSURE:**

Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH's) are licensed in California by the Committee on Dental Auxiliaries, Dental Board of California. Applicants must pass both a clinical and written examination, and undergo a criminal history investigation, prior to receiving a license.

Temporary permits to practice prior to receiving a license cannot be issued, and examination or licensure in another state or country are not recognized in California.

IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE TO PRACTICE AS A REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST WITHOUT FIRST RECEIVING A LICENSE.

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**1. Fee.** Each application must be accompanied by a fee of \$231.00. (Application fee \$20.00 -- Examination fee \$155.00 -- Fingerprint processing fee \$56.00). Make check payable to: **Committee on Dental Auxiliaries**

**2. Requested Information.** All information requested must be supplied by applicant by the published application final filing date. Each question must be answered fully, truthfully and accurately. A false statement is a crime, and grounds for denial of licensure.

If the space for any answer is insufficient, the answer shall be completed in space 17 or on an attachment signed by the applicant and specifying the number of the question to which it relates.

**3. Filing of Completed Application.** The COMPLETED application must be on file with the COMDA office not later than thirty (30) days prior to the first examination date. In addition to the application and fee, you must submit ALL of the following. If all required information and documents are not received as described below, you WILL NOT be permitted to sit for the examination.

**a. Photograph.** One 1-1/2" X 1-1/2" head photograph of yourself taken within six (6) months of the examination must be submitted

**4. Radiation Safety Certification - Non-California Graduates.** Graduates of

with your application in the coin envelope. HOME POLAROID'S WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

**b. Fingerprints.** Two completed fingerprint cards (see important separate sheet) must be submitted with your application.

**c. License Status in Other States.** Individuals licensed in other states must include in their application certification of license status by all states in which licensed regardless of the status of the license.

**d. Graduation from an Accredited Program.** Applicants must have graduated from an accredited dental hygiene program in order to apply for examination. The program from which you graduated **MUST** complete question 15 on page 3. If the program has not completed at the time the application is signed, the program director must send a letter at least 15 days prior to the exam verifying completion of the program.

**e. Written Examination.** Successful completion of the National Board of Dental Examiners' examination for dental hygienists is required. Confirmation of successful completion by the Joint Commission on Dental Examinations must be received by COMDA at least 15 days prior to the deadline for the clinical examination.

**f. Verification of completion of California Board-approved courses.** Certificates of completion of the following Board-approved courses must be RECEIVED (not postmarked) in the COMDA office at least 15 days prior to the exam date:

(1) periodontal soft tissue curettage;  
(2) administration of local anesthetic agents; and,  
(3) administration of nitrous oxide and oxygen.

non-California programs must complete the radiation safety certification form and return it

with a separate check for \$10 in order to be able to take radiographs in California. Applications will be returned if one check is submitted. Certification of completion is not required to qualify to take the examination.

**5. Re-Examination Applicants.** Applicants who have taken and failed the examination within the last two years are only required to submit the application, \$155.00 examination fee, and the 1-1/2" X 1-1/2" photo.

**6. Special Accommodations.** Applicants whose religious beliefs preclude being examined on Saturday or Sunday must clip a note to the application stating the day on which they cannot take the exam and the reason why. After your application is processed, it is not possible to change examination dates.

If you have a disability and may require special accommodations, request and submit a "Request for Accommodation" with the application. If accommodation is not requested in advance, availability cannot be guaranteed.

**7. Requests for Refunds.** All requests for cancellation of examination must be received a minimum of 15 days prior to the examination.

Requests made less than 15 days prior to the exam are not eligible for refund of the exam fee. The \$20 application fee and \$56 fingerprint fees are non-refundable, and a fee will be charged for all returned checks.

## **CLINICAL EXAMINATION**

Each candidate must pass a clinical examination which includes an examination of a patient and complete scaling and root planing of one or two quadrants.

Refer to the separate Clinical Examination Information document for detailed information about the examination.

## **FACILITIES**

Licenses will not be issued without criminal history clearance from the Department of Justice and the FBI.

California law requires all licensees to have a

When available, the rental of equipment and radiological services is an accommodation provided by the dental school. It is not obligatory and may be suspended at any time by the school. The schools at their discretion may charge fees for supplies or services.

COMDA derives no benefit from the rental of such equipment and services, and assumes no responsibility for any arrangement made between a school and the examination candidate.

Examinations may be conducted each year in three locations at the following dental schools: (Schedule of examinations is provided in a separate listing)

University of California, San Francisco  
School of Dentistry  
707 Parnassus Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94143  
(415) 476-1778

University of Southern California  
School of Dentistry  
925 West 34th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90007  
(213) 740-1550

Loma Linda University  
School of Dentistry  
Loma Linda, CA 92350  
(909) 824-4939

Since accommodations, facilities and equipment vary at different schools, candidates may wish to acquaint themselves with the premises and equipment available prior to the examination. Schools are not responsible for patient procurement or answering questions on patient acceptability.

## **RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION**

The results of the examination will be mailed to candidates approximately six (6) weeks after the last exam date in the cycle. Do not phone COMDA before this time, since staff is not permitted to give out results over the phone.

Social Security number. A license will not be issued to out of country graduates without a copy of the social security card.

## CURRENT DUTIES OF THE REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST

### IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE TO PRACTICE AS A REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST WITHOUT FIRST RECEIVING A LICENSE.

Be sure to become familiar with the duties which Registered Dental Hygienists are allowed to perform in California, as contained in the following laws and regulations.

**Section 1068. POSTING OF DENTAL AUXILIARY DUTIES.** All dentists utilizing the services of dental auxiliaries shall post a notice in a common area of the office which delineates duties and functions deemed by the board as delegable within stipulated settings and/or circumstances. Such notice shall be readily accessible to all individuals under supervision of the dentist.

**Excerpts from Section 1067. Definitions.** As used in this subchapter:

...

(d) "Registered dental hygienist" or "RDH" means a licensed person who may perform all procedures authorized by the provisions of these regulations and in addition may perform all functions which may be performed by a dental assistant and registered dental assistant, under the designated supervision of a licensed dentist.

...

(g) "Oral prophylaxis" means the preventive dental procedures including complete removal of explorer-detectable calculus, soft deposits, plaque, stains, and the smoothing of unattached tooth surfaces. The objective of this treatment shall be creation of an environment in which hard and soft tissues can be maintained in good health by the patient.

...

(i) "Direct supervision" means supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist who must be physically present in the treatment facility during performance of those procedures.

(j) "General supervision" means supervision of dental procedures based on instructions given by a licensed dentist, but not requiring the physical presence of the supervising dentist during the performance of those procedures.

### **Section 1088. RDH Duties and Settings.**

(d) A registered dental hygienist may perform the following procedures under the **direct supervision** of a licensed dentist when done so pursuant to the order, control and full professional responsibility of the supervising dentist. Such procedures shall be

(a) Unless specifically so provided by regulation, the prohibitions stated in Section 1085(a), subsections 1 through 8 of these regulations shall apply to duties performed by a registered dental hygienist.

(b) A registered dental hygienist may perform all duties assigned to dental assistants and registered dental assistants, under the supervision of a licensed dentist as specified in these regulations.

(c) Under **general supervision**, a registered dental hygienist may perform the following duties in addition to those provided by Section 1760(b) of the Code:

- (1) Root planing;
- (2) Polish and contour restorations;
- (3) Oral exfoliative cytology;
- (4) Apply pit and fissure sealants
- (5) Preliminary examination, including but not limited to:
  - A. Periodontal charting;
  - B. Intra- and extra-oral examination of soft tissue;
  - C. Charting of lesions, existing restorations and missing teeth;
  - D. Classifying occlusion;
  - E. Myofunctional evaluation.

(6) The following direct supervision duties of a dental assistants and registered dental assistants.

#### A. Dental Assistant

1. Taking impressions for diagnostic and opposing models
2. Applying non-aerosol and non-caustic topical agents;
3. Removing post-extraction and periodontal dressings;
4. Removing sutures;
5. Taking intra-oral measurements for orthodontic procedures;
6. Checking for loose bands;
7. Removing ligature ties;
8. Applying topical fluoride;
9. Placing elastic separators.

#### B. Registered Dental Assistant

1. Test pulp vitality;
2. Removing excess cement from supragingival surfaces of teeth;
3. Sizing stainless steel crowns, temporary crowns and bands;
4. Temporary cementation and removal of temporary crowns and removal of orthodontic bands;
5. Placing post-extraction and periodontal dressings.

checked and approved by the supervising dentist prior to dismissal of the patient from the office of said dentist:

(1) All duties so assigned to a dental assistant or a registered dental assistant, unless otherwise

indicated;

(2) Periodontal soft tissue curettage (Evidence of satisfactory completion of a board-approved course of instruction in this function must be submitted to the board prior to any performance thereof);

(3) Administration of local anesthetic agents, infiltration and conductive, limited to the oral cavity (Evidence of satisfactory completion of a board-approved course of instruction in this function must be submitted to the board prior to any performance thereof);

(4) Administration of nitrous oxide and oxygen when used as an analgesic, utilizing fail-safe type machines containing no other general anesthetic agents (Evidence of satisfactory completion of a board-approved course of instruction in this function must be submitted to the board prior to any performance thereof).

(e) A registered dental hygienist may undertake the duties authorized by this section in the following settings, provided the appropriate supervision requirements are met:

(1) The treatment facility of a licensed dentist,

(2) Licensed health facilities as defined in Section 1250 of the Health and Safety Code,

(3) Licensed clinics as defined in Section 1203 of the Health and Safety code,

(4) Licensed community care facilities as defined in Section 1502 of the Health and Safety Code,

(5) Schools of any grade level whether public or private,

(6) Public institutions including, but not limited to, federal, state and local penal and correctional facilities,

(7) Mobile units operated by a public or governmental agency or a non-profit and charitable organization approved by the board, provided, however, that the mobile unit meets the statutory and regulatory requirements for mobile units,

(8) Home of a non-ambulatory patient, provided a written note from a physician or registered nurse is available stating that the patient is unable to visit a dental office,

(9) Health fairs or similar non-profit community activities. Each such fair or activity shall be approved by the board. Any other facility must be approved by the board.

#### **1684.5 Unprofessional Conduct**

(a) In addition to other acts constituting unprofessional conduct under this chapter, it is unprofessional conduct for any dentist to perform or allow to be performed any treatment on a patient who is not a patient of record of that dentist. A dentist may, however, after conducting a preliminary oral examination, require or permit any dental auxiliary to perform procedures necessary for diagnostic purposes, provided that the procedures are permitted under the auxiliary's authorized scope of practice. Additionally, a dentist may require or permit a dental

auxiliary to perform all of the following duties prior to any examination of the patient by the dentist, provided that the duties are authorized for the particular classification of dental auxiliary pursuant to Article 7 (commencing with Section 1740):

(1) Expose emergency radiographs upon direction of the dentist.

(2) Perform extra-oral duties or functions specified by the dentist.

(3) Perform mouth-mirror inspections of the oral cavity, to include charting of obvious lesions, malocclusions, existing restorations, and missing teeth.

(b) For purposes of this section, "patient of record" refers to a patient who has been examined, has had a medical and dental history completed and evaluated, and has had oral conditions diagnosed and a written plan developed by the licensed dentist.

(c) This section shall not apply to dentist providing examinations on a temporary basis outside of a dental office in settings including, but not limited to, health fairs and school screenings.

(d) This section shall not apply to fluoride mouth rinse or supplement programs administered in a school or preschool setting.

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